

LPC Weekly Report

Friday, July 22 2022



**Highlights for LPCs:**

**LPC July Member Network Call Next Week.** Join us on Thursday, July 28 at 2:00 p.m. ET for our next LPC member network call, which this month will focus on workforce: policy and practical initiatives from LeadingAge. This month's panel will feature key LeadingAge staff members on our workforce initiatives, including Ruth Katz, Janine Finck-Boyle, Andrea Price-Carter and Jenna Kellerman. Linda Couch will also speak briefly on project-based vouchers for Assisted Living. This call will be packed with important information that you will not want to miss! If you are not already registered, email Dee at [dpekruhn@leadingage.org](mailto:dpekruhn@leadingage.org).

**A Day of Action on the Aging Services Workforce.** Get Ready for the July 27 Aging Services Workforce Day of Action! On Wednesday, July 27, join fellow LeadingAge members around the country for a virtual Aging Services Workforce Day of Action, part of the Aging Services Workforce Now campaign, to demand Congress take immediate action to address the workforce crisis in aging services.

Get ready for July 27th when we will ask LeadingAge members to:

- Contact your members of Congress and tell them to take action on legislation that will strengthen the workforce and support the aging services infrastructure.
- Share your workforce story with your members of Congress: what staffing challenges do you have and how are they impacting your ability to meet the needs of older Americans.
- Urge others, including residents and staff, to add join us on the July 27 Aging Services Day of Action.

Learn more about LeadingAge's [Aging Services Workforce Now](#) campaign.!

**Roadmap for Investment in Dementia Care:** In the next eight years, the number of people living with dementia worldwide could reach 78 million, according to the World Health Organization. On average, people with dementia live five to 10 years after diagnosis and they will need medical, neuropsychological, and social services throughout their care journey. In much of the world, people living with dementia and their caregivers do not receive high-quality, coordinated, comprehensive care. The Milken Institute and Alzheimer's Society have released a [roadmap](#) to address this urgent need.

**The Economic Costs of Caregiving:** The July 20<sup>th</sup> *Generations* [article](#) asserts that there must be increased access to home- and community-based supports for all who need care and care workers must be paid a thriving wage, [which would help to address the worker shortage in the field](#). The author also states that when the country ensures caregivers receive the support they deserve, generational poverty will be disrupted by allowing all women, particularly women of color, "to participate in the workforce, stabilizing their families, their communities and, by extension, this nation."

**Are You a LeadingAge Member Who Serves Lower Income Older Adults?** There is an AARP [funding opportunity](#) to support older adults applying for the [Medicare Savings Program](#), a program from states to help eligible older adults pay for Medicare Part A and B premiums. AARP is looking for community-based organizations, safety-net health care providers and clinics, and social services agencies who have experience serving older adults living with low income, assisting older adults with accessing public benefits, and a record of outreach to underserved populations. The grants seek to educate, engage, and

enroll more eligible older adults with low income in Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs) and to learn about barriers to awareness, application, and the recertification process. The grant awards are \$50,000-\$150,000 and applicants must be from one of 22 focus states: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The application deadline is August 3, 2022.

### ***COVID-19 Related Updates:***

**White House Summit on Vaccines.** The White House announced plans for a Summit on the Future of COVID-19 Vaccines via livestream on Tuesday, July 26 from 11:00 AM – 3:15 PM ET. The program will outline a path towards innovative, next generation COVID-19 vaccines and feature leaders who are on the cutting edge of these discoveries. Interested individuals can [RSVP here](#). The event agenda will be shared closer to the date of the event. Many LeadingAge members have asked about the non-mRNA vaccines and about vaccines that might be more effective in fighting Omicron and its variants. It is possible that these questions will be addressed at this summit.

**Long COVID affects nearly 1 in 4 cases, with symptoms that may last for months.** A new USC study finds that 23% of people infected with COVID will become “long haulers,” and identifies predictors of who is likely to develop the sometimes-debilitating symptoms that can last for months. The research, which appears in [Scientific Reports](#), is unique because it accounts for preexisting symptoms such as fatigue and sneezing that are common to other conditions and may be mistaken for COVID symptoms. An interdisciplinary study from the USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology also reveals predictors of [who might get long COVID](#). [Note: CDC has previously reported that long COVID affects 1 in 5 cases.]

**COVID-19 boosters offer good protection against early Omicron subvariants:** First and second COVID-19 vaccine booster doses conferred substantial protection against emergency department/urgent care (ED/UC) visits and hospitalizations caused by infections with the Omicron subvariants BA.1, BA.2, and BA.2.12.1, finds a CDC study of adults in 10 US states published late last week in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. Analysis of the study by CIDRAP is found [here](#).

**Boost Now or Wait?** As this KHN [article](#) explains, the rapidly mutating virus has created a conundrum for the public and a communications challenge for health officials. Dr. Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association, said he doesn’t expect to see the public’s level of interest in the vaccine change much even as new boosters are released and eligibility expands. In his view, parts of the country with high vaccine coverage will remain relatively insulated from new variants that emerge, while regions with low vaccine acceptance could be set for a “rude awakening.”

**House Hearing on Long COVID.** The House Select Committee on the Coronavirus Crisis will host a [hearing on long COVID](#) on July 19 at 10:00 AM ET. The hearing can be viewed on the Committee’s [live stream](#). Long COVID has affected millions of Americans, sometimes causing serious, long-term health issues that have forced people out of the workforce and interfered with daily life. A recent federal government estimate indicates that [nearly 1 in 5 adults](#) who have previously been infected with the coronavirus are still experiencing symptoms of Long COVID, such as fatigue, shortness of breath, cognitive dysfunction (e.g., “brain fog”), and chronic pain, among others. Approximately [1 million Americans](#) may have been pushed out of work because of the condition, causing them to lose wages and, in some cases, employer-based health insurance. Many Americans face difficulties in receiving a diagnosis and treatment due to a lack of awareness and barriers to care. The hearing can be viewed on the Committee’s [live stream](#).

### ***Advocacy Updates and Hill News:***

**Congressional Virtual Briefing: Addressing the Workforce Crisis in Aging Services.** To coincide with the new coordinated advocacy campaign, “Aging Services Workforce Now,” LeadingAge held a Congressional Briefing on July 20, 2022, for Senate and House congressional staff. The briefing was an opportunity to highlight the policy opportunities that would meet the needs of older Americans in the face of persistent and severe workforce shortage for aging services providers.

Katie Smith Sloan served as moderator for the briefing. A few LeadingAge providers were also invited to address their workforce challenges, and House and Senate leaders who focus on addressing workforce challenges across the long-term care continuum. Representative Ann Kuster (D-NH), Co-Chair, of the newly formed bipartisan House 21st Century Long-Term Care Caucus, attended the briefing and shared opening remarks. The Congresswoman also reiterated the caucus’ commitment to proactively studying ways to create a better system for older Americans, including the issues that would strengthen the existing workforce challenges facing the long-term care sector.

The LeadingAge panelist included: Mike King, LeadingAge Board Chair and President & CEO of Volunteers of America, Alexandria, VA; Tom Syverson, Director of Government Relations, The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society / Sanford Health, Sioux Falls, SD; Jeff Farber, President & CEO, The New Jewish Home, New York, NY; and, Rob Lahammer, Vice President of Engagement and Advocacy, Presbyterian Homes and Services, Roseville, MN.

Katie also highlighted the top findings in the LeadingAge Workforce snap poll, conducted in June 2022, where respondents reported that their workforce difficulties remain; the pipeline for potential workers has not gotten stronger as people leave the field; and nursing positions are especially difficult to fill. Additionally, LeadingAge provided an overview of the campaign’s [“full policy asks”](#) that we are asking Congress and the Administration to take immediate action, which includes:

- Pay aging professionals a living wage.
- Offer incentives to retain and attract qualified staff.
- Expand training and advancement opportunities.
- Build dependable international pipelines of trained caregivers.
- Enact meaningful, equitable long-term care financing.

**Older Adult Homelessness Will Increase Significantly Without Action.** On July 19, the Senate Banking Subcommittee on Housing, Transportation, and Community Development held a hearing, “Opportunities and Challenges in Addressing Homelessness.” Almost 600,000 people experience homelessness on any given night in the United States, Subcommittee Chair Tina Smith (D-MN) said in her opening statement. The biggest factor in rise of homelessness is the severe shortage of affordable housing and the lack of housing supply, Chair Smith said. “The answer is to provide shelter, to provide housing first, to help people get stable and healthy.” Chair Smith said homelessness disproportionately impacts Black, Latino, and native communities. Expanding the supply of affordable senior housing is LeadingAge’s top housing priority. “Over the next decade or so ... demographic shifts will result in the older adult homeless population increasing significantly: nearly tripling by 2030. People of color are and will continue to be overrepresented in this population,” Ann Oliva, the chief executive office of the National Alliance to End Homelessness, said the hearing. Read more about [the hearing here](#).

**Grandfamilies bill and CDBG change pass the House.** A bill to authorize a \$100 million grant program for intergenerational housing supports was added to a “must-pass” defense authorization bill in the House on July 14. The bill, the “Grandfamily Housing Act of 2021,” was is cosponsored by Representatives James McGovern (D-MA) and Ayanna Pressley (D-MA). Grants could be used to employ a service coordinator, facilitate outreach to intergenerational families, plan and offer services to intergenerational families, and retrofit and maintain existing spaces within a property that contains intergenerational housing. Read more about [the grandfamily support bill here](#). In addition to a successful amendment to add the Grandfamily bill, an amendment from House Financial Services

Committee Chair Maxine Waters (D-CA) to the defense authorization bill was also approved. This amendment would expand eligible uses of the Community Development Block Grant program to include new affordable housing construction. Currently, only about 24% of CDBG is used for affordable housing. This amount could increase if the program's eligible uses are expanded. The bill these provisions were amended into, the National Defense Authorization Act, is an annual "must-pass" bill that authorizes Pentagon spending levels and sets overarching military policy. The Senate will soon take up its version of NDAA and differences between the two will be negotiated in a conference committee.

**House Hearing on H-2 Visa Program's Impact on Workers.** On July 20 at 10:15 AM ET, the Workforce Protections Subcommittee of the House Education and Labor Committee will hold a hearing, "Second Class Workers: Assessing H-2 Visa Programs Impact on Workers." The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) administers the H-2 visa programs, which are temporary worker visas for persons who want to enter the United States for employment for a fixed period of time. The H2-A visa is for temporary or seasonal agricultural work; the H-2B visa is for temporary or seasonal non-agricultural work. While this hearing is not about aging services workers, who are not currently authorized to enter the United States under H2, it will provide a clear picture of the arguments that are often offered against creating an H-2 program for temporary aging services workers, such as the H-2Age program proposed by LeadingAge. The hearing will be held remotely, and can be viewed via [live stream](#).

***News from LeadingAge:***